



## Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers

June 5, 2006

### NETS Feature:

#### **Many Crashes Involving Work-Related Driving Should Not Be Considered 'Accidents'**

In a presentation on managing risk at the Fleet News Double Jeopardy conference, Rob Gifford of the UK's Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) challenged phraseology terming crashes as 'accidents', which suggests they are often random and unavoidable. "Instead," he said, "regularly there are circumstances involved, particularly with drivers being at fault that make them anything but accidental. Many deaths result from somebody doing or not doing something that otherwise might have prevented the incident." Gifford urged fleets to place greater emphasis on safety and risk management and focus on drivers' actions being the main cause.

More..... [http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/060106\\_accidentsfeat.asp](http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/060106_accidentsfeat.asp)

### Latest Traffic Safety News

#### **According to SHRM, Businesses Slow To Help Employees With Escalating Gas Prices**

Gasoline prices around the country have hit \$3 in many areas, but 72 percent of organizations have no plans to help employees deal with the high cost of transportation, according to a recent Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) online survey. Among those who are reaching out, though, raising mileage reimbursements to the IRS cap was the most popular method, cited by 20 percent of SHRM respondents. The survey, conducted April 25-May 1, 2006, collected online responses from 380 HR professionals.

#### **"Smart Glasses" Alert Drowsy Drivers**

By the time a drowsy driver realizes he or she is dozing off at the wheel, it's likely too late to avoid a crash. According to the NSF Alert, developers will soon be offering "smart glasses", called "Optalert" to Australian drivers. The optical gadgets will measure eye movements over 500 times a second and begin beeping if the driver's eye movement appears to slow while driving. The glasses were funded by the Australian government and NRMA Insurance and were tested by big trucking companies last year. For further information, visit, <http://www.optalert.com/home.html>

#### **Yellow Deer Alert Signs Aren't Helping Drivers**

We've all seen the yellow signs with the silhouette of a leaping deer, thousands of them line highways across the nation. They are supposed to save you from a life-threatening encounter with a deer but chances are they won't. Research from the University of Kansas confirmed what highway engineers already suspected: There's no evidence that deer-warning signs reduce collisions with cars. Unlike other highway signs that warn of approaching construction or a sharp curve, a deer sign doesn't mean a deer is nearby. And experts say that drivers tend not to react to a hazard they don't see. Fifteen states are supporting a \$1.4 million study in Montana to determine whether flashing signs triggered by animal movement would reduce wrecks at Yellowstone National Park.



### **Carmakers Change Marketing Pitch To Attract Young Car Buyers**

According to Detroit News, Detroit's automakers are creating their own online content in an effort to appeal to younger car buyers from the Internet generation jaded by traditional marketing practices. Ford hopes to connect with consumers through two-minute video segments that will chronicle the company's turnaround efforts. But Ford is not alone in this effort. Today, each carmaker is charting its own course through the largely undiscovered country of online multimedia marketing, trying to connect with consumers who are increasingly immune to old-fashioned television advertising. "It's about telling your own stories through entertainment," said Aaron Lenzini, a vice president with the William Morris Agency in Beverly Hills who manages General Motors Corp.'s efforts in Hollywood and beyond. "It's a brave new world of media and entertainment."

### **International Conference on Distracted Driving: Conference Summary and Recommendations**

Recommendations generated by over 100 delegates from Canada, the United States and abroad based on their collective conclusions about distracted driving, are intended to provide guidance to a wide range of stakeholders. The conference held in Toronto, Ontario in October 2005 included a blend of formal presentations by internationally recognized traffic safety experts and small-group problem-solving workshops. The report integrates and summarizes key information from the presentations as well as the conclusions and recommendations from the workshops.

The Summary of the Proceedings and Recommendations from the International Conference on Distracted Driving is now available at:

<http://www.trafficinjuryresearch.com/whatNew/whatNew.cfm?intNewsID=%20205&intContactID=12>

### **Older Drivers: Crash Involvement Rates And Causes**

The Centre for Automotive Safety Research at the University of Adelaide recently published a report addressing the claims that older drivers are over-represented in road crashes. Although there were arguments to support the claim that there are high-risk subgroups of older drivers, it was concluded that high-risk older drivers couldn't be identified in mass crash data. The full document is available online at: <http://casr.adelaide.edu.au/reports/CASR015.pdf>

### **Use Of Voice Controls Growing In Vehicles**

In the 1990s, many believed they would soon be controlling their computers simply by talking to them. This never happened, but the research continued and progress was made. Speech may now be poised for a comeback on PCs and, even more so, on handheld devices where data entry remains a challenge. The next wave of tools could make devices easier to use and users more productive. According to the Tech Maven at Business Week, look for voice technology to become a lot more common in cars, where hands-free operation of everything but the car itself can be a real safety plus. In the Acura TL, the driver can control the navigation, climate-control, and audio systems, as well as a Bluetooth-equipped phone, just by speaking. Most luxury cars now have some sort of voice-control system, and this should move rapidly into the mass market over the next couple of years.

### **Motorists Now on Video For Railroad Crossing Violations**

A new law signed by Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich will use photo enforcement to reduce traffic crashes at railroad crossings. Blagojevich said in a prepared statement. "Now that drivers know they'll be photographed if they go around lowered crossing gates, hopefully they won't do it." Cameras will catch an image of the vehicle and its driver. Lawbreakers caught on tape will receive a traffic ticket through the mail.



### **Circuit City Survey Shows Vacation Planners Look To Technology To Save Gas, Keep Entertained And Connected On The Road**

A new national survey by Circuit City finds Americans are concerned about high fuel prices, but believe technology can help them avoid wasting gasoline this summer. Consumer research commissioned by the electronics retailer showed vacation planners are considering a host of tech tools for their summer road trips. Sixty-one percent of survey respondents believe a GPS navigation device would help them avoid wasting gasoline on a summer road trip and were interested in turn-by-turn directions to travel destinations with gas station and hotel locators, also built in. Thirty-six percent also would chose to bring a notebook computer, 23% a portable DVD player, 11% an MP3 player. Satellite radio and handheld video games rounded out the list.

### **Race and Ethnicity in Fatal Motor Vehicle Traffic Crashes 1999 - 2004**

The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis has released a report that explores the differences among racial and ethnic groups in the frequency of occurrence of characteristics or behaviors associated with fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes. The report also suggests that alcohol has played a major role in the deaths of both drivers and pedestrians. To view: [http://trb.org/news/blurb\\_detail.asp?id=6283](http://trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=6283)

### **Restraint Use Patterns Among Fatally Injured Passenger Vehicle Occupants**

The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis has released a Traffic Safety Facts Research Note that examines restraint use patterns among fatally injured passenger vehicle occupants. According to the research note, in 2004, the majority of the occupants of passenger vehicles killed in motor vehicle crashes were unrestrained. When examined more closely, the data show that the proportion of unrestrained fatalities was higher among males, on rural roadways, in pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles, in single-vehicle crashes, and in the age group of 8 to 44 years old. To view: [http://trb.org/news/blurb\\_detail.asp?id=6284](http://trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=6284)

### **Beliefs and Attitudes About Speeding And Its Countermeasures**

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has released a report that explores the attitudes, experiences, and behavior of licensed drivers in metropolitan Sydney, regional New South Wales (NSW), and rural NSW in relation to speeding. View at: [http://trb.org/news/blurb\\_detail.asp?id=6278](http://trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=6278)

### **Highway Safety and Public Health: State Legislative Action, 2005**

The National Conference of State Legislatures has released a report that summarizes the many bills on traffic safety issues that were considered by state legislatures during the 2005 legislative sessions. The report is designed to provide information about current traffic safety issues to legislators, federal officials, and other interested parties. For further information, [http://trb.org/news/blurb\\_detail.asp?id=6273](http://trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=6273)

### **States grapple with curbing risks from drivers using cell phones**

States wrestling with unpopular proposals to ban cell phone use while driving are looking at alternatives to curb in-car calls. An Ohio bill would increase criminal penalties when cell-phone use causes a crash. The bill would allow charges of aggravated vehicular assault or aggravated vehicular homicide, both felonies, if prosecutors believe phone use contributed to or caused a crash. Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia have some kind of law related to cell phones in the car, but only D.C. and three states - New York, Connecticut and New Jersey - have banned the use of hand-held cell phones while driving, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. A dozen states have considered proposals this year or last year that would increase civil or criminal penalties



related to cell phones and driving, said Matt Sundeen, an analyst with the National Conference of State Legislatures. He knows of no states that have enacted the legislation. For further information visit: National Conference of State Legislatures web site at <http://www.ncsl.org>

### **Volvo Group's Safety Knowledge To Reduce Traffic Crashes In Humanitarian Aid Transports**

The Volvo Group is initiating cooperation with 40 humanitarian aid organizations worldwide to increase awareness of traffic safety issues and reduce the number of accidents in humanitarian aid transports. Among other actions, the Volvo Group's own accident research team will analyze the causes of the accidents and present recommendations for measures to reduce the number of accidents and their consequences. The project will continue until 2009, and a total of three reports will be presented. The Fleet Forum, based in Geneva, is a joint initiative by the WFP (UN World Food Program), IFRC (International Federation of the Red Cross) and World Vision International and runs a combined fleet of more than 60,000 vehicles and have annual operating costs of about USD 800 M. The Fleet Forum's goal is to increase its humanitarian transport capacity through development and utilization of uniform work methods for vehicle fleet management and operation.

### **Road Rage Survey Reveals Best and Worst Cities**

The first annual In The Driver's Seat Road Rage Survey, commissioned by national auto club AutoVantage, found that the least courteous city in the country is Miami, followed by Phoenix, and New York. The other two cities in the bottom five were Los Angeles and Boston. The most courteous city is Minneapolis, followed closely by Nashville, St. Louis, Seattle, and Atlanta. Behaviors by other drivers that cause stress for commuters, and which can lead to road rage, include: Driving too fast, Tailgating, Cutting over without notice. View the press release at: <http://www.theautochannel.com/news/2006/05/16/006847.html>

### **Runzheimer International's Annual Benchmarking Process Underway**

Runzheimer International has launched its Second Annual Total Employee Mobility Benchmarking Process. This tool measures the total employee mobility costs of organizations providing comprehensive information relating to key areas of employee mobility, including business vehicle, travel, mobile/home office, corporate aircraft, relocation, and international assignment programs. For further information, visit: [www.runzheimer.com](http://www.runzheimer.com)

### **Safety Impacts And Other Implications Of Raised Speed Limits On High-Speed Roads**

TRB's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Research Results Digest 303: Safety Impacts and Other Implications of Raised Speed Limits on High-Speed Roads explores the effects of raised speed limits from 55 miles per hour or greater on freeways and non-freeways in rural and urban settings. The effects considered included impacts on safety and operations, as well as socioeconomic and environmental effects. The full report is available on the TRB website as NCHRP Web-Only Document 90. View at: [http://trb.org/news/blurb\\_detail.asp?id=6265](http://trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=6265)

### **Sioux Falls, SD Has America's Best Drivers**

According to the 2nd annual "Allstate America's Best Drivers Report" Sioux Falls, SD is the U.S. city with the safest drivers. This ranking of the best drivers in the 200 largest cities in America revealed that the average driver in Sioux Falls will experience an auto collision every 14.3 years, compared to the national likelihood of a crash every 10 years – making them 30 percent less likely to have an accident than the national average. Allstate researchers analyzed company claim data to determine the likelihood drivers in America's 200 largest cities would experience a vehicle collision compared to





the national average.

### **Driving Performance While Using Cell Phones: An Observational Study**

This study examined the impact of using a hands-free cell phone while driving on speed and safe gap keeping behaviors. The study also examined the association between the measure of disturbance created by using a cell phone and the driver's awareness of the disturbance. Results indicated that the gaps between the drivers' cars and those in front of them diminished when drivers were engaged in the cell phone conversations. Repeated measures revealed that drivers that had short conversations did not change their speed, while drivers who were engaged in long (over 16 minutes) conversations drove faster. No effect of drivers' awareness toward cell phone-related disturbance on actual driving behavior monitored in the present study was found.

*Rosenbloom T. J Saf Res 2006; ePub: ePub*

### **Economic Impact Of Motorcycle Helmets: From Impact To Discharge**

Previous studies of injured motorcyclists suggested a marginal inpatient hospital cost difference between helmeted and unhelmeted riders. The purpose of this study was to expand the economic analysis of motorcycle helmet utilization to the point of injury by including motorcycle crash patients who do not require hospital admission. Unhelmeted motorcyclists were found to have incurred charges of \$39,390 + \$1,436 per injury, whereas helmeted motorcyclists incurred charges of \$36,334 + \$1,232 per injury. With a current estimate of 197,608 motorcycle crashes/year in which 69,163 riders were unhelmeted, the differential healthcare economic burden between unhelmeted and helmeted motorcyclists is approximately \$250,231.

*Eastridge BJ, Shafi S, Minei JP, Culica D, McConnel C, Gentilello L. J Trauma 2006; 60(5): 978-984.*

### **Be Alert To Twist On Car Rental Costs**

As gas prices increase, the cost of renting SUVs and other larger vehicles is often less than for the more fuel-efficient compact models. This is also compounded by automakers selling more of these devalued vehicles to rental car companies. Some rental agencies are raising prices for compact models, offering good deals on SUV rentals resulting in consumers driving vehicles based on pricing not familiarity or preference.

## **News from the USDOT**

### **New NHTSA Administrator Announced**

On Friday, May 26, 2006, Nicole Nason was confirmed as the new NHTSA Administrator. She previously served as the Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Government Affairs and the Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Congressional Affairs for the United States Customs Service. Ms. Nason also served as the Communications Director and Counsel to former Congressman Porter Goss and as Governmental Affairs Counsel at Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Ms. Nason received her bachelor's degree from the American University and her Juris Doctor from Case Western Reserve.

### **"What We Know About Impaired Driving" Symposium**

In March 2006, NHTSA's Impaired Driving Division hosted a symposium to discuss "What We Know About Impaired Driving." Staff from NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis (NCSA) and professionals from other Federal agencies (the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) presented data and research on the problem and impact of



impaired driving in our nation. The presentations are available on  
[http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org/ImpairedDriving\\_Symposium/index.htm](http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org/ImpairedDriving_Symposium/index.htm)

### **Update on New Enforcement Campaign to Support Impaired Driving Crackdown**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is developing and testing a new theme to support its impaired driving crackdown in FY'06. The new campaign theme will replace You Drink & Drive. You Lose used across the nation to support impaired driving enforcement activities since 1999. The new taglines and ads will be ready in time for the Labor Day impaired driving enforcement crackdown. The three tag lines that tested best are: 1) Drunk Driving. Do the crime. Do the time. 2) Drunk Driving. Over the limit. Under arrest. and 3) Drive Drunk. Ride to Jail.

### **Work-Life**

#### **New Campaign For Teen Drivers To Improve Safety in Work Zones**

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers, killing more than 6,000 every year. These additional risks also are present in highway work zones, where a teenage driver is killed every 3 days, and seven teenagers are injured each day. Over the next several years, highway construction is expected to increase by 33 to 65 percent, and the number of roadway work sites will increase proportionally. To improve the safety of new teen drivers in work zones, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) have developed a multifaceted campaign called "Turning Point: Roadway Work Zone Safety for New Drivers, to be used primarily in the driver education process. It is intended to help them understand the hazards they may encounter while driving through work zones and learn how they can travel through work zones more safely. For further information, contact Jim Childers at ARTBA, 202-289-4434 or [jchilders@artba.org](mailto:jchilders@artba.org)

#### **New Committee Formed To Prevent Teen Motor Crashes**

The National Research Council/Institute of Medicine of the National Academies has established a new committee in the Board on Children, Youth, and Families and Transportation Research Board to draw upon insights from the behavioral, cognitive, social, health, and biological sciences, especially in the area of adolescent development and learning processes, that might be applied to strategies to promote responsible driving behaviors among teens and reduce motor vehicle crashes. This project is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and State Farm Insurance Companies. Additional information about the committee may be found at [http://www.bocvf.org/teen\\_driving.html](http://www.bocvf.org/teen_driving.html)

### **International Traffic Safety News**

#### **ATS Announces Providing Driver Training For All Employees**

By providing driver training for all its employees, not just those that drive for work, ATS Euromaster has gone a step further than most employers. Now 4,000 full-time employees will have their skills behind the wheel individually assessed and training where necessary given by DriveTech. Leon Atkins, group health, safety and corporate affairs director, said: "While accidents will always happen, it is imperative we have in place measures to reduce the potential for injury among our employees."

#### **Fleets Warned Over-the-Counter Medicines Impair Company Car Drivers**

With the onslaught of the hay fever season imminent, drivers should be warned to read the small print of medicines which could affect their concentration and reaction speeds. A bill presented to Parliament by London MP Andrew Dismore, called for better information for drivers about the medicines they may



be taking. It calls for better warning labels to be printed on medicines. The legislation would provide a clear, eye-catching system to warn motorists of the risks of mixing certain medicines and driving. Those behind the campaign believe current labeling is confusing and often printed on leaflets inside the packet and in small print. Clearer labeling, a red triangle marking, would alert the public to the unexpected hazards of what they may be taking and provide a clear safety message, triggering the need to consider risks before driving.

### **The Risks Of Drugs And Alcohol When Driving**

Roger Singer, consultant at UK risk management firm Avoidd, warned that 'morning after' alcohol impaired drivers account for one-fifth of motorists who came through the company's drink-driving course. Singer also advised firms to consider how to handle the relatively newer phenomenon of drug-driving staff. Companies need to ask themselves a series of 'what ifs' when writing their workplace drug and alcohol policy for drivers ranging from how to avoid accidentally drink-driving the morning after company events to how to handle company car-driving employees with a serious drink problem. He suggested that a credit card-sized card containing the company's policy should be given to all drivers, to show to pharmacists to check whether they are safe to drive after taking any prescribed medicines.

### **Halving Roadway Fatalities: A Case Study From Victoria, Australia, 1989-2004**

The U.S. Federal Highway Administration Office of International Programs has released a report that examines Australia's accomplishments in highway safety and performance measures it has established. Based on interviews with politicians, senior agency staff, and others, the report also explores how traffic safety strategies were put together and, above all, how they were implemented, often amid public controversy but with majority community support. View at:

[http://www.trb.org/news/blurb\\_detail.asp?id=6312](http://www.trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=6312)

### **Community Attitudes To Road Safety**

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has released a report that documents the findings from its latest survey of community attitudes towards road safety. The issues examined include perceived causes of road crashes, exposure and attitudes to random breath testing, attitudes to speed, perceptions of police enforcement, mobile phone use while driving, reported usage of seat belts, involvement in road crashes, and experience of fatigue while driving. View at:

[http://www.trb.org/news/blurb\\_detail.asp?id=6297](http://www.trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=6297)

### **Total Motion Vehicle Monitor Survey Finds 18% Not Roadworthy**

A study of UK company cars and private vehicles used on business has highlighted how drivers are making the jobs of fleet managers more difficult. An inspection of more than 2,000 company and privately-owned cars used on business found that 18% were unroadworthy and 35% were not properly maintained. Up to 81% of all drivers admitted to not carrying out the recommended weekly safety checks on items such as tyres, lights, fluids and glass. The study found that privately-owned cars were more likely to have faults than company vehicles. The survey was conducted by Total Motion as part of its 'vehicle monitor' service. The appraisals were undertaken by industry-qualified field engineers, who individually inspected 2,018 vehicles for client companies around the UK.

### **2006 Company Cars: The Drivers' Perspective Report Highlights Crucial Fleet Areas**

A study produced by the Bank of Scotland Vehicle Finance (BoSVF) of 2,000 UK company car drivers has highlighted areas that fleet managers should concentrate on to ensure safety of employees out on the road. Some companies could do better in checking driving licenses, offering driver training and penalizing drivers who cause accidents.



### **Advanced Driving Test For Business Drivers**

As reported by FleetNewsNet, an advanced driving test just for business drivers has been launched in a bid to cut the number of UK road deaths. Operated by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and driver training company, DriveTech (UK), ROADTest is aimed at company car and van drivers who, because they are out on the road for longer periods of time, have accidents rates between 35% and 50% higher than private drivers. Charles Davis, head of driver and fleet solutions for RoSPA, said: "This test is set to become the national standard for business drivers. It has been developed with input from RoSPA and DriveTech (UK) customers to provide a hazard perception assessment together with a theory and practical test leading to a qualification that will be recognised and respected by anyone who employs company drivers." A typical driver could expect to take three days of training, but, as a modular programme, it can be completed between three months and three years. The pass gained lasts for three years. For more information: [www.roadtest.org.uk](http://www.roadtest.org.uk)

### **Encourage Your Drivers Instead Of Just Using Enforcement**

UK Government policies towards fleet drivers are the equivalent of 'yelling in English at someone who only speaks French', according to Mark McArthur-Christie, director of policy for the Association of British Drivers. He recently warned there was too much focus on external controls to keep motorists in check, rather than training them to be better drivers in the first place.

Speed cameras, road humps, chicanes and other initiatives acted as 'substitutes for thinking' he said, adding: "If you got drivers to engage their brains, then you would not need all these things. How many companies encourage their drivers when they get it right, such as when they have been accident-free for a few years? There is a lot of enforcement, but not a lot of encouragement."